

## Message Text

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ORIGIN SNM-02

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 NEA-14 IO-14 ISO-00 PRS-01 SS-20

AGR-20 SWF-02 AID-20 IGA-02 PA-04 USIE-00 SSO-00

NSCE-00 INRE-00 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-11 JUSE-00 NSAE-00

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 208012

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR

SUBJ: DEPARTMENTAL SPOKESMAN'S STATEMENT REGARDING  
TURKISH DECISION TO ADOPT STRAW PROCESS IN POPPY  
CULTIVATION

REF: GENEVA 5940 (NOTAL)

1. THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF A STATEMENT READ BY  
DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN ANDERSON AT THE NOON PRESS  
BRIEFING ON SEPTEMBER 20:

"THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED ITS DECISION JULY 1  
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OF THIS YEAR TO AUTHORIZE RESUMPTION OF THE CULTIVATION

OF THE OPIUM POPPY. SINCE THAT TIME THERE HAS BEEN AN ONGOING, HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS DURING WHICH WE HAVE MADE CLEAR OUR CONCERN AT THE POSSIBILITY OF A RENEWED FLOW OF HEROIN MADE FROM TURKISH OPIUM TO THE UNITED STATES. WE STRESSED THE VITAL NEED FOR EFFECTIVE CONTROLS. A SPECIAL UN TEAM HAS ALSO RECENTLY HELD DISCUSSION ON THIS SUBJECT IN TURKEY. THE TURKISH PRIME MINISTER HAS REPEATEDLY ASSURED US OF HIS GOVERNMENT'S STRONG DETERMINATION TO PREVENT SM'GGLING.

"THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT HAS INFORMED US THAT IT HAS DECIDED IN PRINCIPLE TO ADOPT A METHOD OF HARVESTING

THE POPPIES, CALLED THE POPPY STRAW PROCESS, WHICH INVOLVES THE COLLECTION BY THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT OF THE WHOLE POPPY POD RATHER THAN OPIUM GUM. TRADITIONALLY, THE OPIUM GUM WAS TAKEN BY THE FARMERS THROUGH LANCING THE POD IN THE FIELD AND IT WAS A PORTION OF THIS GUM THAT WAS ILLEGALLY DIVERTED.

"WE ARE VERY PLEASED WITH THIS DECISION. WITH EFFECTIVE POLICING TO MAKE SURE THAT THE OPIUM GUM IS NOT ILLEGALLY EXTRACTED BY THE FARMERS, THE REFLOW OF HEROIN THAT WE FEAR CAN BE AVOIDED."

2. WHILE AN OFFICIAL DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS RELEASE WAS NOT ISSUED, PRINTED COPIES OF THE STATEMENT WERE MADE AVAILABLE TO INTERESTED MEMBERS OF THE PRESS. IN ADDITION THE FOLLOWING NOTE ELABORATING ON THE STRAW PROCESS WAS LIKEWISE MADE AVAILABLE INFORMALLY:

"THE POPPY STRAW PROCESS MEANS THAT THE FARMERS WOULD SELL ALL OF THEIR OPIUM POPPIES TO THE GOVERNMENT WITHOUT LANCING (INCISING) THE PODS. THE TRADITIONAL METHOD OF PRODUCTION IS FOR THE FARMER TO LANCE EACH OF THE POPPY PODS DURING THE WEEK OR TEN DAYS AFTER MATURITY IS REACHED WHEN THE PHENOMENON KNOWN AS ROOT PRESSURE IN THE LIVING PLANT CAUSES THE MILKY LATEX OF THE POPPY PLANT TO OOZE THROUGH THE SLASH. THIS

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LATEX OR OPIUM GUM IS THEN COLLECTED BY THE FARMER, AFTER ABOUT 16 TO 24 HOURS OF OOZING, AND HE THEN WAS SUPPOSED TO SELL THIS OPIUM GUM TO THE GOVERNMENT.

"UNFORTUNATELY IT PROVED ALL TOO EASY FOR THE ILLICIT TRAFFICKERS TO BUY A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF THE OPIUM GUM FROM THE FARMERS. THE PROCESS WOULD REQUIRE THAT THERE BE NO LANCING AND THAT THE PODS AND SEVERAL INCHES

OF THE STEM (THIS IS CALLED "POPPY STRAW") BE SOLD TO THE GOVERNMENT. POLICING, IF IT IS EFFECTIVE, COULD MORE READILY DETECT WHETHER THE PODS HAD BEEN SECRETLY LANCED OR PLANTS DUG UP AND DESTROYED TO CONCEAL SURREPTITIOUS LANCING.

"A SOPHISTICATED INDUSTRIAL PLANT IS REQUIRED TO EXTRACT MORPHINE FROM THIS STRAW, JUMPING THE STAGE OF OPIUM GUM, WHICH HAS BEEN THE PRODUCT TRADITIONALLY SOUGHT BY THE TRAFFICKERS FOR THE PRODUCTION OF HEROIN.

"THESE ARE THE REASONS WHY OUR EXPERTS BELIEVE THAT THE POPPY STRAW METHOD IS LESS DIFFICULT TO CONTROL EFFECTIVELY THAN THE TRADITIONAL METHOD."

3. AT THE TIME OF THE STATEMENT, STAFF MEMBERS OF KEY CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES AND THE OFFICES OF SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN NARCOTICS MATTERS WERE INFORMALLY MADE AWARE OF THE TURKISH DECISION IN SUCH A WAY AS TO INDICATE THAT WE REGARD THIS AS A POSITIVE STEP FORWARD.

4. WHILE THE TREATMENT OF THE MATTER WAS THUS LOW KEY, WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT IT WILL HELP SERVE TO BLUNT FURTHER INITIATIVES ON THE HILL TO PENALIZE TURKEY AT THIS TIME BECAUSE OF ITS DECISION TO RESUME POPPY CULTIVATION.

5. TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS BRIEFING BEING SENT ANKARA AND GENEVA ONLY BY SEPTTEL. KISSINGER

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**To:** ANKARA MULTIPLE  
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